

BOOK REVIEWS

The Cultural Basis of Afghan Nationalism. By Ewan W. Anderson and Nancy Hatch Dupree (Editors). London and New York: Pinter Publishers, 1990. xvi + 264 pp. maps. nps. ISBN 0-86187-869-8.

Three years after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Afghan crisis was in a state of semi-permanence: the Najibullah government was still in power, the repatriation of the Afghan refugees on a large scale had not occurred, the splitting-up of the Afghan resistance still impeded any common move or action and no decisive military success on the side of the mujahideen had been recorded; in these conditions, the reconstruction of the devastated country was still problematic.

Although events have moved on since the book was published, its twenty contributions, most of them written before the withdrawal of the Soviet army in February 1989, remain on the whole topical.

The authors are scholars: political experts, anthropologists, jurists, islamologists, and members of the Pakistani Civil Service, Afghans and Pakistanis, as well as Europeans and Americans. They express an inner as well as an outer point of view.

The title of the book is somehow misleading: Afghan Nationalism appears here less than the fragmented reality of the Afghan society (Part II), the condition of the Afghan refugees and its consequences for Pakistan (Parts III and IV).

After a foreword by Akbar Ahmed, the book, divided in five parts, starts with two essays of general nature; the first replaces the Afghan refugees, as well as their Pakistani hosts, in the Islamic tradition of the *hijrah*, the second proposes, in terms of international law, a broader redefinition of the concept of refugee adapted to the situation today.

Part II—Afghan Society—moves to recent aspects of the political, cultural and social history of a country that has never been a State in the Western European sense. Let us mention especially here the contribution of S. Q. Reshtia about the failure of the three attempts at modernization of Afghanistan and its society since 1920, and the one of late S. B. Majrooh, who, in a text premonitory of his tragic death, analyses pertinently the vulnerability of the Afghan intellectuals, Western oriented, who have nothing in common, both psychologically or socially, with the rural population, and are also rejected by the Islamic resistance.

Part III is devoted to the Afghan refugees in Pakistan. The authors deal exclusively with Pushtun refugees, who are of course a majority in the North West Frontier Province and in Baluchistan where they live among the Pakistani Pushtuns, sharing the same language, the same culture and the same Pushtun value system (*pushtunwali*). Indeed, the Tajik, Uzbek, Turkmen, and Hazara refugees, certainly much less numerous, are almost completely overlooked in this book. One can also regret that no reference is made to the Afghan refugees in Iran, about 2 million according to the UN estimates. However studies on Afghan refugees on a scholarly basis are rare enough to make these contributions particularly valuable.

In this part of the book, let us mention the article of Nancy Dupree who hopes that the Afghan women who 'have demonstrated courageous strength in upholding the values of their society under great adversity' will 'not be left invisible' (p. 132) in the reconstruction of the country.

In Part IV, the authors scrutinize the geostrategic and geopolitic consequences of the Afghan crisis on Pakistan and the neighbouring countries. From the beginning of the crisis, Pakistan has shown an exceptional hospitality towards its refugee guests; but the long-term presence of the refugees, in and outside the camps (the movement outside the camps has accelerated since 1989, particularly because of the cutting down of the international aid), and of the armed mujahideen on the Pakistani soil, has placed considerable political, economical and social burdens on Pakistan; however 'within the region as a whole, their presence has resulted in certain benefits and on an international scale, they have been a key bargaining factor', while 'on the local scale and particularly in the longer term, the refugees are likely to cause fragmentation' in Pakistan, writes Anderson (p. 248) who, in the Epilogue, raises questions about the repatriation of the refugees, about the reconstruction of Afghanistan and about international aid, questions which remain, till today, unanswered.

Micheline Centlivres-Demont *Institute of Ethnology, University of Neuchâtel*

Indochinese Refugees 15 Years later. By Chan Kwok Bun (Editor). Singapore: Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore (*Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science* Vol. 18 No. 1), 1990. 226 pp. S\$45/US\$25 (one year subscription); ISSN 0303-8246.

Smoke and Fire: The Chinese in Montreal. By Chan Kwok Bun. Foreword by Wang Gungwu. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1991. xiv + 338 pp; nps; ISBN 962-201-461-5.

Sociologist Chan Kwok Bun is one of the most productive scholars in the fields of Chinese immigration and Indochinese refugee studies. With research experience in Canada, Singapore, Hong Kong and a couple of Southeast Asian countries, he is highly knowledgeable in Asian migration matters.

Indochinese Refugees 15 Years Later, a theme issue of the *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science*, consists of ten articles (plus Chan's introduction), by twelve authors, on the situation of the Indochinese refugees in the Asia-Pacific region, fifteen years after the beginning of their exodus. What is interesting in this collection of papers is that it focuses on the refugee question within Asia—it is especially concerned with the countries of first asylum—rather than discussing refugee resettlement in third countries (e.g. the United States, Canada and Western Europe) as is usually done.

Chan's argument is that the refugee situation constitutes a good example of 'global apartheid' (this concept is borrowed from Canadian sociologist Anthony Richmond). 'The developed worlds, through grand conspiracy, pay the developing worlds to keep refugee populations, allegedly on a temporary basis, in their countries which, in the case of Indochinese refugees, turns out, until now, to be rather permanent' (pp. 2-3). This argument seems sound enough, although the 'grand conspiracy' mentioned by Chan should probably be understood in structural rather than intentional terms. The developed countries have not devised any explicit plot for keeping refugees out of their limits. It is their economic and political apparatus—and the global relations between the North